

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SP-02 USIA-06 AID-05 EB-08
NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 COME-00
IO-13 L-03 AGRE-00 CIAE-00 FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00
XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 PM-05 DODE-00 PA-01
DOTE-00 FMC-01 CG-00 DLOS-09 OES-07 /135 W
-----092024 132034Z /46

R 131210Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2616
INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ACCRA 1987

LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, LNS, PGOV, GH
SUBJ: US/UK TALKS ON CONDITIONS IN GHANA

REF: () ACCRA 1864; (B) ACCRA 1305

1. SUMMARY: AMERICAN AND BRITISH DIPLOMATS IN ACCRA
ARE IN GENERAL AGREEMENT ON NUMEROUS TOPICS OF LOCAL
IMPORTANCE--PIRACY, A FORTHCOMING REFERENDUM ON UNION
GOVERNMENT, DETERIORATING ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, GHANA'S
REQUEST FOR MORE FOOD AID, AND LEVEL OF SOVIET
ACTIVITIES HERE. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR SMITH AND BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER
MILLS, ACCOMPANIED BY DCM AND RESPECTIVE POL AND ECON
OFFS, MET MARCH 9 TO CONTINUE PERIODIC REVIEW OF
POLITICAL/ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN GHANA. FOLLOWING
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SIGNIFICANT POINTS WERE COVERED:

3. PIRACY: ACCORDING TO OFFICERS OF A WESTERN-FLAG
SHIP MOORED OFF TEMA HARBOR, THERE HAD BEEN ELEVEN
ACTS OF PIRACY IN PAST SEVEN DAYS. OFFICERS WATCHED
ON RADAR AS PIRATE CANOES LEFT SHORE IN EARLY MORNING
HOURS AND MOVED TOWARDS SHIPS STANDING OFF PORT.

OFFICERS TRIED TO RAISE SHIPS BY RADIO BUT COMMUNICATIONS WATCHES WERE IN SOME CASES NOT BEING MAINTAINED AND WARNINGS WERE NOT RECEIVED. PIRATES BOARDED SHIPS, SHOOK DOWN CREWS, RELIEVING THEM OF CASH, RADIOS AND OTHER PERSONAL BELONGINGS, AND THEN RETURNED TO SHORE. SINCE PIRATES WERE ARMED AND CREWS WERE NOT, RESISTANCE WAS NOT FEASIBLE.

4. WHEN US SIDE DISCUSSED PIRACY WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (AFTER EARLIER ATTACKS ON FISHING BOATS UNDER CONTRACT TO STAR-KIST), MFA OFFICIAL OFFERED TO RAISE MATTER WITH GHANA NAVY, BUT NOTED NAVY DID NOT HAVE RESOURCES TO CONTROL PIRATES. BRITISH FEEL THAT NAVAL PERSONNEL MAY BE WORKING HAND-IN-GLOVE WITH PIRATES BUT SAY OVERALL PROBLEM IS MUCH WORSE IN OTHER WEST AFRICAN PORTS (E.G., FREETOWN, LAGOS). IN ACCRA, THEY BELIEVE, SHIPS CAN USUALLY AVOID ATTACK IF THEY TAKE REASONABLE PRECAUTIONS. HOWEVER, SHIPPING HERE COULD BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED IF CREWS REFUSED TO CALL AT TEMA DUE TO PIRATE THREAT.

5. MARCH 30 REFERENDUM ON UNION GOVERNMENT: COMMENTING ON POSSIBILITY THAT HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG MIGHT TRY TO RIG REFERENDUM, BRITISH SAID THEY HAD HEARD RUMOR THAT A BOX FULL OF SPURIOUS "NO" VOTES OPPOSING UNION GOVERNMENT WAS DISCOVERED BEFORE OFFICIAL BALLOTS HAD BEEN PRINTED. THIS SUGGESTS PEOPLE'S CONFIDENTIAL

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MOVEMENT FOR FREEDOM AND JUSTICE (WHICH HOPES TO DEFEAT ACHEAMPONG'S UNION GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL AT POLLS) IS AS CAPABLE OF STACKING THE DECK AS ITS OPPONENT. SOME BRITISH BUSINESSMEN SPECULATE THAT REFERENDUM MAY NOT TAKE PLACE AT ALL SINCE OPPOSITION TO ACHEAMPONG REGIME HAS GROWN CONSIDERABLY IN RECENT WEEKS. BOTH SIDES FELT THAT WHILE REFERENDUM WILL PROBABLY BE HELD ON SCHEDULE, POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE WILL BE HIGH BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER VOTING. IN ANY CASE, REFERENDUM WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY FAIL TO USHER IN AN ERA OF POLITICAL STABILITY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ACCRA 1987

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6. PROSPECTS FOR ECONOMY: BOTH SIDES FELT MISMANAGEMENT AND CORRUPTION ARE GETTING WORSE; ECONOMY CONTINUES ITS INEXPORABLE DOWNWARD DRIFT. US SIDE NOTED THAT IMF TEAM WHICH PLANNED TO COME TO ACCRA IN APRIL TO DISCUSS NEED FOR ECONOMIC STABILIZATION POLICIES HAS DECIDED NOT TO COME SINCE GOG APPEARS UNWILLING TO BIT BULLET ON REDUCING BUDGET DEFICIT, DEVALUATION OR OTHER AUSTERE AND HENCE POLITICALLY DIFFICULT MEASURES. WORLD BANK IS ALSO BEARISH ON GHQKA; IT HAS HALTED WORK ON PROPOSED NEW LOANS. BRITISH REPORTED THAT COMMISSIONER FOR FINANCE APPIAH ADMITTED GOG ACCOUNTS ARE OVERDRAWN BUT COMPLAINED THAT FUND AFD BANK ARE IMPOSING NEW AND "UNREASONABLE" CONFIDENTIAL

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CONDITIONS ON GHANA. APPIAH SAID COCOA CROP IS LATE; THERE WILL BE MORE FOREIGN EXCHANGE AVAILABLE IN APRIL-MAY AFTER IT IS SOLD, BUT AT PRESENT GOG DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH FUNDS TO COVER IMPORTS. IT IS BRAWING UP ITS OWN PACKAGE TO PRESENT TO IMF. HOWEVER, US AND UK BOTH AGREE GOG TECHNOCRATS WILL HAVE TROUBLE GETTING ACHEAMPONG TO APPROVE MEANINGFUL REFORMS. (SEE ALSO SEPTTEL)

7. BRITISH TOLD APPIAH THAT OUTSIDE WORLD LACKS CONFIDENCE GOG IS WILLING TO PUT ITS ECONOMIC HOUSE IN ORDER; MILLS ADDED THAT ECONOMIC STABILIZATION MEASURES WILL HAVE TO BE APPLIED SUCCESSFULLY FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS BEFORE SKEPTICS ARE CONVINCED THAT GOG REALLY WANTS TO CORRECT PROBLEMS, NEVERTHELESS, APPIAH EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE NEW GOG PACKAGE "WILL BE WORTH PRESENTING TO BANK AND FUND"; HE FELT HE IS BEGINNING TO HAVE SOME EFFECT ON ACHEAMPONG AND IS MAKING PROGRESS IN OVERCOMING STRONG FAMILY AND SOCIAL PRESSURES LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR CASTLE'S REPEATED INTERVENTION IN ECONOMIC DECISIONMAKING.

8. FOOD AID: BRITISH, AS WELL AS US AND OTHERS, HAVE BEEN ASKED TO PROVIDE FOOD AID. (REF A) MILLS WAS TOLD BY LONDON THAT DUE TO SAHEL FOOD SHORTFALLS THERE IS NOT MUCH FOOD ON HAND IN UK TO MEET GHANA'S NEEDS. BOTH SIDES AGREED ON NEED FOR CLOSE COORDINATION BETWEEN DONORS, ESPECIALLY ON SUCH KEY QUESTIONS AS VALIDITY OF GOG FIGURES ON FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND FOOD SITUATION.

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9. SOVIET ACTIVITY IN GHANA: BOTH SIDES AGREED SOVIETS CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THEIR RELATIVELY ACTIVE PROFILE HERE BUT HAVE MADE NO MAJOR SHIFTS IN NATURE OR LEVEL OF THEIR AID, CULTURAL OR OTHER OVERT OPERATIONS. THEIR EFFORT TO TAR US IN THE MEDIA WITH THE BRUSH OF CIA INTERVENTION (REF B) SEEMS TO HAVE FLOPPED. MEDIA ATTACKS ON AMERICAN OR BRITISH INTELLIGENCE HAVE NOT BEEN REPEATED RECENTLY. SMITH

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